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Georgia Southern graduate’s public service to have greater impact with public health degree

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Recent Georgia Southern University honor graduate Lauren Afsharian worked in the hospitality industry for years and loved being of service to others, but she wanted to do so in a more impactful way. Afsharian chose the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health on the Armstrong Campus to expand her reach.

“As a non-traditional student, I knew that I needed a degree to accomplish my dreams,” she said. “Majoring in public health checked all of my boxes for wanting to make a positive impact in high-need, underserved communities. I chose Georgia Southern because it is a well-known, reputable school with an accredited public health program.”

Afsharian, who graduated this fall with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health with a focus on health education and promotion, is applying to graduate school at Georgia Southern with hopes to major in elementary education.

“My experiences and degree have shown me how important a quality education can make in a person’s life for their future, and I would love to have the opportunity to create a strong foundation for students during their most crucial years,” Afsharian said. “It is certainly still in line with public health, just from a different angle.”

Afsharian honed her public service skills outside of the classroom by volunteering at the Children’s Hospital at Memorial Health and representing the Jiann-Ping Hsu College College of Public Health at the Savannah Black Heritage Festival. She also worked on research that focused on the effects stress has on the mental health of students.

“These experiences increased my awareness of mental health and also the importance of research so that policies and resources can be improved on campus for those in need,” she said. “Volunteering at the Children’s Hospital was incredibly humbling and gave me an opportunity to make kids smile or bring some comfort to them and their families during a challenging time.”

One person Afsharian said was important to her success at Georgia Southern was her advisor Audra Taylor, in addition to her professors.

“Ms. Taylor knew I wanted to finish my studies as soon as possible, and she helped make that happen by suggesting the courses for me to take and reorganizing my schedule so that I could take as many classes as possible,” Afsharian said. “She was always encouraging and knew my potential and had faith in me which I really appreciated. My professors were not only my professors but at times my mentors cheering me on each step of the way.”

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